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## **Enlightening Choices: A Century of Anglophone Canons of the Geographical Tradition**

The concept of a 'canon' has resonances in European thought which are mainly legal-cum-ecclesiastical in historical terms and political in our own age. And yet in fact the term 'kanonikos' was first coined by Hellenistic grammarians to delineate that set of works which were 'up to standard' and therefore worthy of being taught to students.<sup>1</sup> Unpacking this, we find two sets of issues which this essay will address in the context of the history of geographical thought. First, we have seen intense debates across the humanities and social sciences over the past four decades about the 'politics of canonicity'. If Hellenistic grammarians wanted to be able to draw a simple binary dividing works up to and below standard, our era has seen a whirlwind of debate, centred in the field of literary criticism, about the processes and politics constituting and contesting such evaluative judgements. The very transition from discussion of 'literary classics' to debating a 'canon' is symptomatic of the turn to critique and contestation of previously taken-for-granted verities about which authors students ought to study.<sup>2</sup> To talk of 'canons' is almost by definition to question them, to highlight the economies of evaluation that lie behind them, to raise the possibilities of either a socially-representative canon or of a set of 'counter canons'.<sup>3</sup> And in these 'canon wars', there have also been those attempting to defend some notion of a canon as vital to humanities scholarship. Scholars of this persuasion have shown the extent to which texts deemed canonical tend to display linguistic and structural subtleties of such an order that it is not simply politics which has engendered their preservation.<sup>4</sup> In the *Bible*, that most canonical of works, for example, books such as the *Song of Solomon* and *Ecclesiastes* are not there solely (perhaps even primarily) for doctrinal reasons, but for their aesthetic qualities as stories and for the literary brilliances they evince, this amounting to a 'double canonicity'.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have also shown the extent to which canonicity is conversational rather than merely coercive: it is dialogue down the ages, the sense that

texts continue to merit discussion and debate, which ensures their continued place in our scholarly firmament, not simply conservatism nor unreflective claims of enduring or intrinsic merit. This conversational understanding of canonical persistence has been formulated in terms of 'interpretative communities',<sup>6</sup> perhaps most eloquently by Kermode who concludes that 'the need to go on talking is paramount,' seeing this in quasi-Wittgensteinian terms: 'the only rule common to all interpretation games, the sole family resemblance between them, is that the canonical work, so endlessly discussed, must be assumed to have permanent value and, which is really the same thing, perpetual modernity'.<sup>7</sup> Kermode also opened up another line of argument, highlighting the role of chance and error in the construction of canons, that it is not solely intention – political, conversational or aesthetic – which canonises texts, but that historical good fortune is also part of the process.<sup>8</sup>

The canon wars, then, are ramified and complex. One further element of this debate, less touted but equally important, should be mentioned as it opens the second stand to which this essay will attend from the notion of 'kanonikos': pedagogy. 'The canon is an *imaginary* totality of works' which only becomes concrete through being taught in a real but inevitably selective syllabus.<sup>9</sup> And whilst there may be an ideological/political component to the process which converts an imagined canonical totality into a real syllabus, it is not the only set of forces at work in that transformation. Reflecting on his editorship of *American Intellectual History: A Sourcebook*, for example, Hollinger is clear that some texts are removed because they do not 'work' in undergraduate teaching, where some which less well represent their historical moment are retained because students can access their import more readily.<sup>10</sup> Readers and teachers, then, impact on the creation and evolution of actual canonical syllabi. Likewise, publishers, permission rights, profitable page limits and the mechanics of publication can also determine the crystallisation of a canon into a teaching tool. While all this reinforces Herrnstein Smith's point that literary 'value', contrary to universalistic arguments about a transcendental canon, is in fact entwined with economic 'value',<sup>11</sup> it also makes the point that canonicity, the memorialisation of texts and authors, is driven by pedagogic pragmatics as well

as value in either of these senses. In the grammarians' coining of the term 'kanonikos' we have twin axes – politics and pedagogy – which can shape an approach to geography's relationship with ideas of canonicity.

This essay attends to the politics (taking this to mean the grounds for selection) and the pedagogy of the canon of geographical writers whom Anglophone historians have chosen to memorialise over the past century. The focus on Anglophone writings is adopted to make this inquiry manageable, but it does leave open the possibility that different canonical dynamics exist in other linguistic arenas of geographical endeavour. If English has become hegemonic in global geographical discussions as has been claimed, its dynamics of canon formation might be deemed disproportionately influential whatever the merits of this hegemony.<sup>12</sup> But further that hegemony creates a potential that Anglophone historians of geography are less alert to non-translated material in the geographical tradition than scholars working in other languages. Restricting inquiry to the Anglophone world, then, may limit the representativeness of any findings made about geography's relationship with ideas of canonicity. This is something which other scholars may wish to address. Two further limitations are imposed. Firstly, this essay looks only at the canon of European geographers for the 'long eighteenth century' (circa 1660-1830). This limitation is again to make the inquiry manageable within a limited canvas. The long eighteenth century is selected because, since the emergence of discussions of the history of geography, this era has been seen (with variations in emphasis and framing to which this paper will return) as a 'discrete' or 'coherent' period. As such it forms a reasonably stable historical entity for analysis over the century of writings about the history of geography to which this essay attends. Secondly, the essay looks at the canons constructed in 'pedagogical' texts, where this is taken to encompass both books explicitly authored for teaching purposes and works which have ended up fulfilling that role against the grain of their authorial intention. If imaginary canons are made concrete via printed syllabi, it makes sense to attend to those histories contained in textbooks and other works of student reference, particularly as the past two decades have seen a notable surge in geographical publishing that seeks to build canons of 'key

ideas' or 'key thinkers'.<sup>13</sup> Pedagogic genres by their nature tend to narrate the history of geography in a compressed fashion and therefore have to make far tougher choices concerning who to include in their canons. Thus, the focus will not extend to scholarly monographs about geography's history except tangentially. As such, monographs on the long eighteenth century by the likes of J.N.L.Baker, E.G.R. Taylor and, more recently, Margarita Bowen and Charles Withers are not addressed in this essay. Attention to these works would, inevitably, create a broader cast of canonical characters but the intention of these texts – to provide new research about geography in the long eighteenth century – is fundamentally different from the pedagogic ambitions of inculcating and preserving a canon of geographical worthies to which all should be exposed in their advanced education as a geographer, this being the task set of the genre of books attended to in the present essay.

This essay begins by tracing the canonical choices made in pedagogic histories of geography in the century from J. Scott Keltie to David Livingstone: which individuals from the long eighteenth century have been deemed worthy of inclusion and on what grounds? How do they fit into a broader depiction of the nature of geography? What scholarly discourses is geography allied to by these choices? Having traced these selections through the decades, the essay then reflects on what is learnt thereby about geography's relationship with ideas of canonicity and more broadly to address whether and how geography functions as a humanities inquiry.

#### HISTORIES OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Geographers have always constructed histories of their inquiries, Strabo commencing his *Geography* with an analysis of Homer and frequently triangulating his comments with those of his predecessors. This is part of a more general tendency amongst geographers to build historical pedigrees for their visions of a 'new' or 'correct' geography, these amounting to 'sketch canons'.<sup>14</sup> Such comments tended, however, to be fragmentary, the emergence of a self-conscious and discrete inquiry into the

history of geography coming in the later nineteenth century. If, for all the reasonable caveats that may be added, the institutional formation of a separate enquiry called geography in the realm of advanced (post school) learning came predominantly in the decades after 1870, moves to study the history of geography came at the same moment.<sup>15</sup> Thus Oscar Peschel, appointed first Professor of Geography at Leipzig in 1871, was also a historian of geography, his *Geschichte der Erdkunde* appearing in 1865.<sup>16</sup> The first Anglophone moves to create a history of geography came slightly later, as did the institutionalisation of geography at the British universities,<sup>17</sup> its first fruits being the monumental studies of ancient geography by E.H. Bunbury (1879) and of medieval geography by C. Raymond Beazley (1897-1907), Beazley briefly acting as a lecturer in geography in the nascent Oxford School of Geography.<sup>18</sup> Such efforts blended with early histories of allied forms of geographical knowledge, notably works such as Heawood's *Geographical Discovery in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (1912), Gunther's *Early Science in Oxford* (1920-45) and (slightly later in its origins) Taylor's work on the history of navigation in the 1930s.<sup>19</sup>

Such Anglophone monographic inquiries into the history of geography were fairly rapidly complemented by the attempt to produce pedagogic works in the form of two interrelated books, J. Scott Keltie and O.J.R. Howarth's pioneering *History of Geography* (1913) and the book Oxford University Press commissioned to succeed to that volume, Robert Dickinson and O.J.R. Howarth's *The Making of Geography* (1933).<sup>20</sup> Each of these books was broad in its chronological sweep, ranging from antiquity to the present day, addressed the long eighteenth century and was aimed at a student audience. Furthermore, both texts were used by historians of cognate disciplines such as anthropology to both define geography and delimit its relationships with its intellectual neighbours.<sup>21</sup> Who did they select as 'canonical' geographers from the long eighteenth century, taking this to mean individuals worthy of inclusion in their brief coverage of the period?

Keltie and Howarth's 1913 volume addressed the period in a chapter entitled 'Measurement, Cartography, and Theory, 1500-1800,' the title revealing the preoccupation with the

advances in the accurate measurement of the earth and its inscription in map form. This drove the roll call of names memorialized: individuals such as John Harrison deserved mention for his marine chronometer, as did other individuals who still crop up in present day histories of geography, such as Maupertuis and La Condamine for their role in addressing the Newtonian conundrum about the shape of the earth, but other individuals appeared who would no longer feature in such a short pedagogic text, names such as Jonathan Sisson and Jean Richter.<sup>22</sup> Keltie and Howarth went on to address the great scholar-cartographers of the age, singling out D'Anville, Delisle and Buache.<sup>23</sup> And in two pages at the end of the chapter devoted to 'theorists' of geography, two names were highlighted: Nathanael Carpenter and Bernhard Varenius. Carpenter earned his place for 'his realization of the function of geographical study which follows from those of measurement and description – namely, that of the correlation of phenomena'. Varenius's *Geographia Generalis* (1650) was praised in similar terms for the comparative method which 'became a standard, not only for the century of its original production, but for the next also'.<sup>24</sup> Other geographers of the long eighteenth century are praised in other sections: the book's core chapters on the early modern era (circa 1450-1800) were structured by region as a history of exploration addressing in turn the Far East, the New World, Australia, the Poles and Cook's efforts (chapters 5-9). This allowed space to praise Humboldt's achievements in South America in chapter 5, those of Bougainville in the chapter on polar work and so on, particular attention being devoted to the achievements of James Cook.<sup>25</sup> Keltie and Howarth summarised Cook's canonical virtues as a geographer as being that:

He made known to the world a larger area of the globe than perhaps any other man before or since; he overcame the disease [scurvy] which had previously been one of the greatest obstacles in the way of explorers, and he laid the foundation of the British Australasian Empire.<sup>26</sup>

In Dickinson and Howarth's successor volume in 1933, the structure was more straightforward, following a simple chronological progression in which the long eighteenth century was addressed in a chapter entitled, 'Measurement and Cartography (1650-1800)'. Of the chapter's

sixteen pages, fully three quarters were devoted to cartography and improving measurement techniques, the canonical roll call being largely identical to that from Keltie and Howarth twenty years earlier. *The Making of Geography* diverged from its predecessor in two ways. First, far more attention was given to the idea of geography as a textual tradition in the final quarter of the chapter: Immanuel Kant was mentioned in this regard, but the discussion focussed on John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography* of 1802.<sup>27</sup> Pinkerton was canonised not so much for his eminence as for his representativeness: *Modern Geography* 'well summarised' 'the state of geographical science on the eve of the scientific development of the nineteenth century'.<sup>28</sup> The second historiographical shift is anticipated in this comment: Dickinson and Howarth unveiled a structure where the birth of a 'scientific geography' came during the first decades of the nineteenth century, with Alexander von Humboldt and Karl Ritter as its midwives. Humboldt and Ritter were deemed 'the founders of modern physical and human geography',<sup>29</sup> a duo who had only one significant predecessor in Varenus,<sup>30</sup> and who then had an entire separate chapter devoted to a detailed exposition of their lives and works. Keltie and Howarth had praised Humboldt and Ritter in 1913, drawing on the work of Peschel,<sup>31</sup> but had not elevated them to such an extent as to accord them a separate chapter. This canonical structure pioneered by Dickinson and Howarth was to ramify down the decades.

Both of these texts developed their canons in the context of a working definition of geography. For Keltie and Howarth, 'the whole structure of geography rests upon two great pillars – upon exploration and upon measurement',<sup>32</sup> and this drove both *who* they chose to enshrine in the case of individuals such as Sisson and also *how* they chose to frame a person's achievement in the case of Cook. Dickinson and Howarth also attended to exploration and measurement, but their self-declared 'essence of the modern conception of geography', unveiled in praising Humboldt and Ritter, was the study of 'the nature of the adjustment of man's activities to the physical environment'.<sup>33</sup> And in this context both histories, intersecting with then-current concerns in the founding decades of a British university discipline of geography, recognised that Germany was the exemplar to copy. Dickinson and Howarth made this clear in their praise of Humboldt and Ritter,



whilst Keltie and Howarth concluded their *History* on this note, acknowledging 'German pre-eminence'<sup>34</sup> in terms which echoed those Keltie had set out in his famous 1886 paper, 'Geographical Education – Report to the Council of the Royal Geographical Society,' commonly known as the 'Keltie Report.' The Keltie Report had discerned the 'high standard of German geographers – a standard which, so far as education is concerned, we [the British] are not within sight of'.<sup>35</sup> A quarter of a century later, Keltie and Howarth's *History* concluded somewhat more optimistically that 'not only in Germany, but in Great Britain ... it [geography] has been widely adopted as an examination subject'. This judgement came in a conclusion whose canon started with a roll call of the German geographical tradition – Kant, Humboldt, Ritter, Peschel, Richthofen and Ratzel were the names which studded these pages – but which went on to incorporate Darwin, Wallace and Joseph Hooker, 'geographers though their fame does not name them so'. German had created modern geography, whilst Britain had developed via Darwin *et al* 'the geographical theory of the control exercised by the environment'.<sup>36</sup> Within a few years, a more restrictedly Germanic reading of geography's canon in the long eighteenth century would be set forth from the other side of the Atlantic.

#### HARTSHORNE'S GERMANIC CANON

In their 1913 bibliography, Keltie and Howarth had recommended one German- and one French-language 'general history of geography', acknowledging that 'no English parallels to these works are to be cited' as they did not exist.<sup>37</sup> While twenty years later Dickinson and Howarth had a more substantial bibliography, still no Anglophone general history was listed.<sup>38</sup> It was in this context that Richard Hartshorne's *Nature of Geography* rose to prominence. As Geoffrey Martin summarised the impact of the book:

The *Nature* was read by Association [of American Geographers] members and by faculty and students in most university graduate departments of geography ... Seminars were organized

around the book. Geography, its history, scope, and method, and the European roots of American geography were examined and thought about as never before.<sup>39</sup>

And yet the *Nature of Geography's* canonical status as a pedagogic text in the history of geographical thought, and the centrality which its canon of geographers in the long eighteenth century came to assume, were rather arbitrary in two ways.<sup>40</sup> First, Hartshorne never intended the work to be a teaching text. It was to be an advanced monograph trying to untangle definitional debates about geography. Second, even within this project, Hartshorne did not originally intend to discuss the era prior to the mid-nineteenth century. As his reflections on the genesis of *Nature of Geography* disclosed, looking back from a vantage point forty years later, the work was already well underway before a 1938 paper by John Leighly led Hartshorne to expand its chronological remit:

Instead of offering a merely negative rebuttal [of Leighly], it seemed desirable to add a major treatment of the historical development of German thought about geography from the mid-eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth.<sup>41</sup>

To create this historical enrichment of his argument, Hartshorne developed two powerful historiographical devices which structured his approach to geography in the long eighteenth century, which drove his selections of canonical geographers, and which were to ramify down the decades in the ways other scholars created their canons. First, Hartshorne developed an historiographical binary between a 'pre-classical' period in geography, roughly 1750-1800 (but with tentacles stretching back to Varenus in 1650), and a 'classical' period which was embodied in the work of two men, Humboldt and Ritter.<sup>42</sup> Secondly, Hartshorne saw the development of modern geography, in ways even more pronounced than Keltie in Britain, as a peculiarly Germanic achievement. As is well known, Hartshorne spent the 1930s assiduously working on his German language skills,<sup>43</sup> and travelled there in 1931-2 and again in 1938-9 as he completed *Nature*.<sup>44</sup> The outcome was the unambiguous statement that 'there can be no question that the foundation of geography as a modern science was primarily the work of German students'.<sup>45</sup> Hartshorne's two structuring devices

were tied: the very binary of pre- and classical geography was itself inspired by German-language historiography of geography by Oscar Peschel and Emil Wisotzki, references to both of whose works studded Hartshorne's account.<sup>46</sup>

If we look at the *Nature* in the light of these two historiographical devices, we find unsurprisingly that both its pre- and its classical-geography are overwhelmingly Germanic. Hartshorne's fourteen-page discussion of the pre-classical age cites some thirty two geographers, of whom 75% are German.<sup>47</sup> As well as being Germanic, the canon Hartshorne offered was unprecedentedly rich: his pre-classical era was adorned with far more names than the projects discussed thus far, giving a greater sense of just how many people might be deemed to have practiced geography prior to 1800. This sense of unprecedented scholarly detail doubtless helped to forge Hartshorne's (initially unintended) reputation as the pre-eminent Anglophone historian of geography. And if one looks beyond those who are merely named to the smaller cast of characters whose work merited extended treatment, a tighter canon emerges. Varenius and Kant warrant discussion as they had for the British historians of geography,<sup>48</sup> but added to this is a cluster of new names: Gatterer, Butte, Bucher and Wilhelmi.<sup>49</sup> Predominantly forgotten since by Anglophone historians of geography, they debated the nature of regional divisions and the respective merits of differing political and natural modes of boundary making. And if Hartshorne's pre-classical cast was diverse and German, he was more explicit still about his classical geography: resting as it did on the shoulders of two canonical figures, Humboldt and Ritter, Hartshorne noted that 'it is an extraordinary fact that modern geography in all lands should owe so much to two men living at the same time in the same country – for over thirty years in the same city'.<sup>50</sup> Hartshorne went on to give a thirty-five page account of the achievements of Humboldt and Ritter, citing their works directly and extensively, and relating them forward and backwards in time towards Ratzel on the one hand and Varenius on the other. Putting this together, Hartshorne's canon of geographers was one where intimations of a 'modern' geography were achieved by Kant, by the cluster who debated the construction of the region and especially by Varenius. While many minor geographers of the age

could be ignored and forgotten, this select canon were worthy of memorialisation as they 'consciously strove to convert a more or less miscellaneous and useful study into an independent science'.<sup>51</sup> And it was Humboldt and Ritter who completed this process, ushering in the forms of geography to which 'modern geography in all lands' was legatee: the achievement was to make us 'think of geography in terms of the study of material landscape features, both natural and cultural, and to consider these features according to their chorographic, or regional, interrelations'.<sup>52</sup>

#### RAMIFYING HARTSHORNE'S VISION.

*The Nature of Geography* was a complex work, too complex perhaps for routine undergraduate pedagogy: it 'may have been at once the most cited and least read book in the history of American geography'.<sup>53</sup> Yet Hartshorne's historiographical structuring devices, a classical-modern binary and a Germanic core to the transition between them, were to ramify to far broader audiences through subsequent efforts to create more pedagogically-digestible histories of geography. The most notable contribution to this process came in Preston James's hugely successful college text, *All Possible Worlds*, first published in 1972 and still circulating today.<sup>54</sup>

James was born in the same year as Hartshorne, 1899, and this chronological coincidence is buttressed by numerous overlaps between their careers, which make the lines of influence between *Nature* and *All Possible Worlds* entirely comprehensible. James was one of Hartshorne's correspondents and, according to his (and indeed Hartshorne's) obituarist, Geoffrey Martin, 'encouraged him to write *The Nature of Geography*'.<sup>55</sup> Further, the two men worked together during World War Two at the Office of Strategic Services, James advising the government that Hartshorne be asked to chair its Geography Division.<sup>56</sup> Beyond this, both men had very similar intellectual interests as geographers, combining an attention to philosophical questions about geography with a

preoccupation with regions. This kinship was noted, for example, by Robert Dickinson, who saw them as 'mark[ing] the culmination of this period' in Anglophone geography.<sup>57</sup>

*All Possible Worlds* was published two years after James retired from Syracuse University.<sup>58</sup>

One can only assume that the book emerged from pedagogy, wherein James had been influenced strongly by Hartshorne's 1939 classic; certainly the Prefatory material acknowledged Hartshorne for reading some of the book.<sup>59</sup> The work was structured around a tripartite historical division into 'classical' (ancient to 1800), 'modern' (1800-1950) and 'contemporary' eras. One element of the periodisation deployed by James is different from Hartshorne: chapter 4, which addresses exploration, and chapter 5, which addresses modes of geographical writing, each span from the Age of Discovery until the advent of Humboldt and Ritter (that is, circa 1450-1800), where Hartshorne's 'pre-classical' age, as we have seen, occupied the shorter timeframe from Varenus in 1650 to circa 1800 at the most and in fact concentrated on 1750-1800. And yet each of James's chapters makes a fairly clear division between the Age of Discovery and an era, not given any precise label, which began circa 1650. And the threshold marked by 1800 is read by James in terms entirely familiar from Hartshorne's historiographical periodisation as being signalled by the arrival of Humboldt and Ritter on the stage. The slight difference is that where Hartshorne unambiguously framed them as the birth of the modern, James made Humboldt and Ritter's geographical achievement more Janus-faced by entitling the relevant chapter 'An End and a Beginning'.

If one looks at the canon of geographers whom James deemed worthy of commemoration, a similar pattern emerges to that discerned in his historiography, one of variations on a basically Hartshornian theme, those variations acting to make a more wide-ranging and accessible pedagogic achievement. Taking the post-1650 sections of chapters 4 and 5,<sup>60</sup> together with the subsequent chapter on Humboldt and Ritter, James cites seventy figures from the long eighteenth century. The big canonical move made by James is to break out of Hartshorne's 'Germanic' vision of geography in the era, seeing instead a 'tri-national' canon, with references evenly spread between German (20),

British (21)<sup>61</sup> and French (21) scholars. Three nations, then, make classical geography, not one. Which of the seventy characters named is elevated from a surrounding context to merit a more extended discussion as being the core of the canon? The answer is roughly fifteen names, evenly split between three nations: Halley, the Cassinis, Varenius, Hooke, Thomas Burnet, Lamarck, Montesquieu, Buffon, Malthus, Buache, Büsching, Malte-Brun, Kant, Ritter and von Humboldt. And resting behind this list is James's key divergence from Hartshorne: where the individuals constituting Hartshorne's canon were all preoccupied with making geography a science of regional interconnections, *All Possible Worlds* is far more eclectic in its sense of formative geographical discourses in the long eighteenth century. Thus James sees in the emergent empiricism of the Royal Society a strand of geography, hence the discussion of Halley and Hooke; he also sees the 'sciences of man' pioneered in the mid eighteenth century as leading towards a mode of human geography which justifies discussions of Montesquieu, Buffon and Malthus.<sup>62</sup> *All Possible Worlds* is also less restrictedly a history of human geography, scholars such as Lamarck, Linnaeus and Hutton being discussed for contributions to the life and earth sciences which are deemed to feed into modern conceptions of physical geography.<sup>63</sup> This more eclectic image of geography's canon is predicated upon a far wider reading base than Hartshorne's: thirty years on, James could draw on a larger range of secondary literature about the history of geography. He also drew on a rich array of information from historians of science, especially historians of exploration and cartography.

*All Possible Worlds*, then, both perpetuated Hartshorne's understanding of the historiography and shape of geography from 1650-1800 and significantly inflected it by its more inclusive sense of geography's nature, both thematically and nationally. But James's textbook was not the only way in which the Hartshornian canon of geography in the long eighteenth century ramified down to the later twentieth century. We can briefly highlight two further avenues that perpetuated Hartshorne's historiographical structures. First, Hartshornian historiography influenced the only Anglophone anthology of primary sources to stretch back as far as the eighteenth century, George Kish's *Sourcebook in Geography* (1978). Kish had been one of those who, together with

Hartshorne, read elements of *All Possible Worlds* in draft, and he showed the reciprocal influence of Hartshorne by arguing that ‘the first formal statements on geography as a science, [were] written between 1650 and 1850’.<sup>64</sup> The *Sourcebook*’s structure followed this intimation. Three short selections were gathered to represent, as the section heading had it, ‘The Beginnings of Modern Geography’, all three being Germanic and ending with Varenius. Eight selections were then excerpted to give the reader a sense of ‘Eighteenth Century Concepts of Geography’, these being exclusively German and French, but encompassing both physical geography through Buffon, Linnaeus, Buache and von Haller, and human geography through Franz, Herder and Büsching. Kant was accorded his own section, albeit amounting to only one selection, while a longer section, ‘The Founders of Modern Geography,’ was in conventional Hartshornian fashion subtitled ‘Humboldt and Ritter’, including four selections from Humboldt, a letter from Thomas Jefferson to Humboldt, and five selections from Ritter. Secondly, *All Possible Worlds* was by no means the only Anglophone textbook which perpetuated Hartshorne’s structuring devices. For example, Unwin’s *Place of Geography* (1992) has a fourteen page chapter on the era, and focuses on Varenius, Kant, Humboldt and Ritter, the last two being depicted as ‘the foundation of modern geography’.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, and more widely read, Holt-Jensen’s *Geography: History and Concepts* focuses on the same four Germans in its eight pages on the long eighteenth century, framing Humboldt and Ritter as the ‘classical period’ with explicit reference to Hartshorne.<sup>66</sup>

In sum, Hartshorne’s construction of eighteenth-century geography and of a canon of geographers from that era has proved massively influential. Three quarters of a century after its publication, *Nature of Geography* remains a vital influence on the canons which pedagogic treatments of geography’s history enshrine and transmit. Even as such textbooks now discuss Hartshorne as part of geography’s history, they are often still structured around the periodisation and canon he constructed.

In his published reflections on the genesis of *The Geographical Tradition* (1992), David Livingstone notes that, rather like Hartshorne, he never meant to write about the long eighteenth century; instead, he 'fully intended beginning the story in the late nineteenth century'. A reader's report and the attempt at a new iteration led him to see this starting point 'was just wrong'.<sup>67</sup> *The Geographical Tradition* as finally published contains a thirty-seven page chapter about the long eighteenth century, 'Naturalists and Navigators: Geography in the Enlightenment,' as part of this extended historicisation of the discipline. Thus unlike Preston James, Livingstone's periodisation does not splice together the age of discovery and the long eighteenth century, taking them instead as discernibly different moments of geographical inquiry. Equally, Livingstone's periodisation started circa 1660, and was thus also at variance with Hartshorne's more compressed sense of a pre-classical era beginning circa 1750 with only thin roots back to Varenus. If we look at the canon of authors contained in Livingstone he cites some sixty one names. Akin to *All Possible Worlds*, they are almost exclusively the denizens of three nations, Britain, France and Germany, but the balance is rather different. Where James's attention was spread evenly, Livingstone's cast is more strongly weighted to the British experience, over half of those cited being from Britain. If we look at the image of geography in the long eighteenth century which the selected authors disclose, the most notable shifts relative to previous historiography are the increase in attention paid to the Royal Society and the rise of modern science, the extended attention given to natural theology as a form of geographical knowledge, the space devoted to materialism, geographical compendia and biogeography, and, reciprocally, the slight reduction in space devoted to the 'sciences of mankind' and the earth sciences, coupled to the more exclusive attention to James Cook as a representative of the exploration tradition.

Of the authors cited, twelve might be seen as the canonical 'core', being discussed at greater length: Robert Boyle, John Ray, Thomas Burnet, Anton Büsching, Johann Süssmilch, Edward Wells,



Immanuel Kant, James Hutton, Montesquieu, Johann Herder, James Cook and Alexander von Humboldt. Obviously, this 'core' is more Germanic than the total pattern of citation in *The Geographical Tradition* and therefore it echoes Hartshorne more strongly, but even here Anglicisation is apparent, half of the figures being British. Of Livingstone's core canon, all had been cited by his predecessors with the exception of Edward Wells, although the attention paid to Süssmilch, Büsching, Herder, Hutton, Ray and Burnet made them new additions to the core. In rounding out the long eighteenth century as a distinct era of geographical thought, Livingstone was closer to Hartshorne's historiography, depicting Humboldt at the close of the chapter as 'engaged in advancing a form of scientific inquiry that made full use of the eighteenth-century geographical tradition of Europe and yet transcended that heritage'.<sup>68</sup> Livingstone also opened his subsequent chapter on 'pre-Darwinian geography' with a discussion of Karl Ritter<sup>69</sup>: even if structurally their contributions were split between two chapters, taken together Ritter and Humboldt were still accorded a twinned, canonical position as articulating a threshold separating Enlightenment from pre-Darwinian geography.

Looking back from a vantage point twenty years later, one can see two exceptionally important shifts in the canonisation of the geographers of the long eighteenth century which *The Geographical Tradition* performed. One is the deployment of a new set of terms derived from intellectual history to depict their achievements. Where for Hartshorne, for example, Humboldt and Ritter marked the transition from pre- to classical-geography, for Livingstone, as just noted, the same individuals articulated a transition from Enlightenment to pre-Darwinian geography. And it is the term 'enlightenment' which is key: *The Geographical Tradition* is the first textbook to mobilise the category of 'enlightenment' to articulate geography's trajectory in this era.<sup>70</sup> It is in terms inspired by notions of enlightenment that the figures canonised in *The Geographical Tradition* are read. Where Keltie and Howarth praised James Cook for discovering vast spaces and laying the foundations of a British Australasian empire, for example, Livingstone's extended portrait focuses on Cook as a scientific traveller, even while never neglecting the entanglements of empire, exploration

and empiricism which the enlightenment performed.<sup>71</sup> And sitting behind this reconceptualisation of the era is Livingstone's deployment of scholarship from the history of science (as per Preston James) but also, more innovatively, the work of intellectual historians, philosophers and theologians.

Livingstone's discursive repositioning of a canon of eighteenth-century geographers in terms of 'Enlightenment' has ramified vigorously over the past two decades. There has been a move towards textbook chapters on the history of geography depicting the era in these terms,<sup>72</sup> while reference works have also come to include entries on 'Geography and/in the Enlightenment'. Thus the *Dictionary of Human Geography* first included two such entries in its fourth edition (2000), and subsequently revised this into one consolidated entry for the fifth edition (2005).<sup>73</sup> By the time of the mammoth *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 'enlightenment' had become a standard entry in works of reference, meriting a long entry by Charles Withers, which names some forty-two individuals from the age, its cast, rather like that of *The Geographical Tradition*, centring on British and French geographers and writers.<sup>74</sup>

The other important shift in canonicity ushered in with *The Geographical Tradition* was contestation. The 'critical turn' in human geography meant that attempts at canon formation such as *The Geographical Tradition* were bound to be scrutinised in wholly new ways accordant with the 'canon wars' seen in literature and history. Thus where Hartshorne's *Nature of Geography* was only exposed to such analysis on its fiftieth anniversary in ways which distressed its author,<sup>75</sup> *The Geographical Tradition* was instantly probed in these terms, notably in a set of short papers published in 1995. Geography's debates about its canon in the 1990s should not be overplayed, being far more conversational than warlike, and thereby avoiding the vitriol of parallel debates in history, literature and cultural studies, and yet the mere fact of critical canonical scrutiny was new and amounted to an echo of the broader debates occurring in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>76</sup>

## GEOGRAPHY AND CANONICITY: A FEW CONCLUDING CANONS

What does one hundred years of pedagogical writing about geography in the long eighteenth century disclose about the discipline's relationship with notions of canonicity? Appropriately enough, we can encapsulate this in a sequence of canons.

### Geography Does Build Canons

Looking at the past century with respect to how the 'long' eighteenth century has been depicted, there is a clear consensus about who constitute the 'core' of the geographical tradition. All the texts canvassed hone in on Varenus, Cook, Kant, von Humboldt and Ritter. There is, furthermore, considerable agreement about a set of geographers of the next rank, supporting characters who constitute a 'contextual canon' of intellectuals and practitioners worthy of mention even if they do not merit the same level of attention. There is, perhaps, more variability in judgements about who to include in this group, but it normally includes Buache, Burnet, Büsching, D'Anville, Hutton, the Forsters, and Montesquieu. Taking these two groups together, it is apparent, then, that geographers do construct canons, that those canons have considerable longevity, and that they are part of the disciplinary identity formation which pedagogy instills.

Even in this 'enduring' canon, however, one can immediately detect change and variability as well as continuity, and this down two axes. First, the *reasons for inclusion* in the canon vary considerably. Thus of the 'core' canon, Varenus and Ritter are included due to their writing of professed works of geography, unlike von Humboldt who devoted his attention to a project far broader than geography *per se* on his own description, a science of cosmos. Likewise, while Kant lectured on physical geography for forty years, it is hard to contend that the quality of this text *qua* geography is the reason for his inclusion in the canon. It is more plausible to suggest that Kant is included in part as representative of the tradition of geographical writing in the era, but still more because of the importance of Kant's critical philosophy, a project whose interconnections with his geographical work are tenuous to say the least.<sup>77</sup> In short, Kant seems to be included in the core

canon for purposes of 'name recognition' and to lend kudos to disciplinary genealogies by virtue of his status in the philosophical canon. There is, then, something by way of 'canon transference' here. Finally, James Cook may be taken as the member of the core canon representing more practical modes of geography, these being at some remove from the textual geographies all the others participated in. This immediately raises a distinctiveness about the nature of geography's canon: not all of those included in the canon primarily understood themselves or were understood as 'geographers' in terms of their agendas and achievements, either in their own era or subsequently. This seems different from the situation for a canon of, say, composers or political theorists.

Cook leads to the second axis of variation in this core canon: as well as individuals demonstrating different grounds for canonical elevation, *the grounds on which they are included in the geographical canon change over time*. In Cook's case, for example, Keltie and Howarth's Cook was canonized for exploring vast areas, measuring them precisely and laying the foundations of the 'second' British empire. Where none of this is denied in, say, Livingstone's *Geographical Tradition* eight decades later, these issues are dealt with through the lens of a different critical project, one which sees Cook as demonstrating the Janus-faced nature of Enlightenment. And in between Keltie and Howarth's efforts and those of Livingstone, Hartshorne, whilst mentioning Cook, did not offer him more than a fringe role in his overwhelmingly Germanic and regionalist approach to the nature of geography.<sup>78</sup> Thus a person's status in any putative 'core-periphery' model of geography's canon can vary between historiographical projects. Similar comments could be made from the other direction about 'fringe' characters in the geographical canon: Malthus, for example, is eulogised as a pioneering social scientist in *All Possible Worlds*, and is thus accorded a status that borders on the canonical, where for Livingstone his key contribution is as a spark that ignited the Darwinian fuse, hence his treatment in Livingstone's pre-Darwinian chapter.<sup>79</sup> Malthus, then, navigates a status between minor canonical player and a short walk-on part, just as Cook's status varies between core and minor canonicity.

### Our Canons Shift in Multifarious Ways

If geography has constructed canons over the past century, they have mutated in ways far more multifaceted than merely who is 'in' and what status individuals are accorded. First, there are shifts in the discourses to which the history of geography and its players are related. The early histories of geography strongly tied geography to the histories of exploration, measurement and cartography. Hartshorne's canon was tied to a vision of geography as the science of areal interrelations. By contrast, both James and Livingstone narrate a more eclectic history which ties the subject to multiple strands in the history of science and intellectual history. Second, a feature this essay has consciously occluded until this point is that different historians construct a geographical canon in relation to different notions of the 'eras' into which geography's history is most readily divided. This essay has deliberately deployed the term 'the long eighteenth century' to frame its periodisation for the simple reason that none of its subjects use that idea and it is therefore (hopefully) neutral between their attempts at periodisation. Thus Keltie and Howarth, Dickinson and Howarth, and Preston James used the idea of a coherent era running from the age of discovery through to circa 1800, where Hartshorne's 'pre-classical' period stretched back to antiquity but was more proximately the era 1750 until the advent of Ritter and Humboldt, and David Livingstone's 'Enlightenment' ran from circa 1660 to 1800. These two modes of historiographical change are interrelated: as geographers look to different sources for inspiration as they write disciplinary histories, so they make different decisions about periodisation.

In respect to these two sets of changes, canonical figures change in how they are imagined to fit new discourses and periodisations. Humboldt, for example, slotted neatly into an 'explorational' vision of geography for Keltie and Howarth thanks to his work in South America, but this could just as easily be configured as grappling towards a science of areal interconnection by Hartshorne and as (more than) Enlightenment geography by Livingstone. Different elements of Humboldt's achievement can be highlighted to remake him in ways which renew his role in the stories told about geography's disciplinary history. And it is perhaps, as Kermode suggested, this

flexibility/modernity which distinguishes those deemed 'core' to geography's story from the 'fringe' players. Thus, in contrast to Humboldt, for example, Malthus entered the geographical canon in what has been called 'the Malthusian moment of global fears of overpopulation and impending catastrophe in the 1960s and '70s via *All Possible Worlds*, but became more peripheral by the 1990s as Malthusian doomsaying passed from the public agenda.<sup>80</sup> But it would be a mistake to see this as reflecting the 'inherent worth' of an author: on the contrary, canonicity tends to be self-perpetuating. Scholars devote more interpretative attention to canonical works and this leads to their perpetuation as canonical.<sup>81</sup> Humboldt may have ridden the waves of critical and historiographical change more successfully than Malthus, then, because he was perceived as a more fit geographical vessel in the first place.

#### Our Canons are Prey to Contingencies

Chance and contingency have inflected the canon of long eighteenth-century geographers identified in this essay. In more concrete terms, one such contingency is the realm of publishing: books are a complex negotiation between authors, publishers and audiences, such that any book that achieves longevity does so as the outcome of many wills, not one. Indeed, whether a book is even seen as a monograph or as a pedagogic textbook, and thus the role a book may play in forming canons, is an emergent property, not a predetermined reality.<sup>82</sup> If Hartshorne strongly influenced half a century of pedagogic writing about geography's history, this is based on two contingencies. First, that he went to Germany in 1938 to further his regional studies, and the incipient tensions of militarization led him to concentrate on the *Nature* as a work which could be conducted in the safer environs of the library. Second, Hartshorne's encounter with an essay by Leighly in 1938 led him, under the guidance of editorial advice, to reformulate his project by adding a long historical prolegomena. It was this prolegomena which historicised his argument and built a canon which was perpetuated by the likes of James, Kish, Unwin and Holt-Jensen. Likewise, the single most influential Anglophone history of geography since Hartshorne, Livingstone's *Geographical Tradition*, was also

not initially intended to reach back prior to the late-nineteenth century before the arrival of an anonymous reader's report. In both cases, the circuits of peer review and publication schedules, of editors and external events, led to mutations that have had an enormous impact on how geographical canons have been constructed. We should not retrodict as concrete that which was fluid; to do so is to render a geographical canon as a reified monolith and thereby to misunderstand the extent to which it is a conversational product which is contingent and can be contested and changed, albeit in ways not intended by any of those engaged in the process of negotiation.

#### We Self-Consciously Debate Our Canons, But In Patterns Moulded By Them:

The 'canon wars' with which this essay opened, the ramifying set of debates about the politics of canonical inclusion, about pedagogy and social justice, which revitalised or wracked the humanities (depending on one's perspective!) from the late 1960s have made themselves felt in the ways geographers debate their canons, albeit in a more conversational and less contestatory fashion than in many other areas of inquiry. This set of critical currents has only manifested itself in debates about how we think of geography's history since the 1990s, but to the extent that canonicity is all about 'conversation with the classics,' even attempts to contest canons are themselves part of a process that strengthens canons: 'changing the syllabus cannot mean in any historical context overthrowing the canon, because every construction of a syllabus institutes once again the process of canon formation'.<sup>83</sup> If we now look to ways in which women have been occluded from stories of geography's history, or to how enslaved and indigenous subjects were formative of geographical knowledges, this is firstly only because such projects have drawn critical energy from engaging with current canons and secondly because they make claims for inclusion within the same structures.

It should also be noted that geography's canonical conversations display a feature shared with historical and literary debates; they become more impassioned about the near past than about that which is more temporally distant. The rather stable canon highlighted in this essay for the

geographical tradition of the long eighteenth century has in fact attracted little attention, critical or otherwise, and has certainly not seen vehement denunciation. It is only for the era after 1870 that geographers chose to attack Livingstone's efforts in *The Geographical Tradition*, and most of the attention lavished on geographical counter canons over the past twenty years has pertained to imperial geographies, to female geographers, to popular geographies and the like in that age and later. The flurry of questions posed of Livingstone's project in *The Geographical Tradition*, that which he neatly termed 'ferret[ing] out an assortment of exclusions',<sup>84</sup> then, focussed on the present day and the era of 'scientific' (Keltie and Howarth, Hartshorne), 'modern' (James) or 'post-Darwinian' (Livingstone) geography to the exclusion of the longer run.

For geographers, it seems, we can agree on Humboldt's place as he is too distant to warrant contention, we must discuss and critique Hartshorne's place as he still attains to Kermode's perpetual modernity (for now), and we must engage with David Harvey as a living presence. Quite why the post 1870 era is seen as more 'relevant', as having more purchase on contemporary geography and society, as demonstrating 'perpetual modernity,' is unclear, but such a time decay function even applies to the historical community, where one finds in the canon that 'the level of agreement about what texts are most important is very high in the earlier period and diminishes predictably the closer one gets to the present'.<sup>85</sup> At least one reason for the preoccupation with the post 1870 period must be that geographers' disciplinary imaginations have been formed in the light of extant histories of geography and canons of geographers to view matters thus. In short, even as counter-canonical projects are developed, so the broad contours of their historical imaginations are predicated on the canonical projects of Hartshorne, Kish, James and others who have identified the later nineteenth century as the threshold of modern geography.<sup>86</sup> This could not, perhaps, be otherwise, but it does frame more accurately what geography's 'canon wars' have and can be about; they are and can only be wars *about* not *against* imaginings of a 'geographical tradition'. Even if, *in extremis*, one suggests it might be best 'actively to forget about the past and to act instead with no regard at all for what has gone before',<sup>87</sup> one is making a claim about what geography should be that



– implicitly at least – draws on models to imagine that mode of geography built from others who form a ‘non-canonical canon’.

### Canons And The Difference Geography Makes

My canons thus far suggest human geography has followed the same broad contours as other inquiries in the humanities in how it imagines its past, builds canons and then debates the worth of those activities. And yet in important respects geography, as discipline and as way of thinking, inflects the dynamics of canon formation.

First, *thinking geographically* allows us to see different patterns of canonicity. If there are geographies of science and of knowledge more broadly,<sup>88</sup> then it comes as no surprise that both canons of geographers and the ‘canon makers’ discussed in this essay vary geographically in their influence. In terms of canonical geographers we have seen, for example, that James Cook plays a smaller role in the ‘Germanic’ historiography of Hartshorne than in Livingstone’s more Anglophone reading. As such, there are discernible geographical patterns to the canons developed by historians of the subject. Furthermore, the impact of those historians varies enormously over space. Staying with Hartshorne, for example, it is well known that the impact of the *Nature of Geography* was very uneven in the US, Sauer’s Berkeley but also powerhouses like Clark University being unswayed by his efforts.<sup>89</sup> Similar patternings were found in New Zealand, where George Jobberns brought Hartshorne’s ideas back in 1939 and where Ken Cumberland was a fervent disciple who then founded the Auckland geography department. By contrast, Wellington, under the aegis of Keith Buchanan, remained immune to Hartshorne’s *Nature*.<sup>90</sup> Disciplinary histories, then, have discernible geographies of inclusion and exclusion, and their canon-making activities have geographically-patterned receptions.

Geography also differs from humanities inquiries by its *more-than-textual canon*. Beyond texts, geography encompasses exploration, mapping, fieldwork, images and numerous other material practices and engagements.<sup>91</sup> As such, an exclusively textual focus of the sort which ideas of

canonicity encourage will *ipso facto* obscure other contributions, other facets of the geographical tradition. Some, like James Cook, can be canonised easily as his ‘more than’ textual achievements are memorialised textually through logs and charts, material practices being preserved in texts, but this is not always the case. In many ways, this was exactly the problem scholars such as Keltie, Howarth and Taylor tried to address in their enumerations of clock- and instrument-makers as part of the roll call of geographical worthies. By and large, the hundred years since they wrote have seen an ever-more restrictively textual approach to geography’s canon and yet, for all the gains in historical and historiographical sophistication which this has allowed, it has also led by its very nature to certain elements of geography’s nature being obscured and undervalued by pedagogic histories of the discipline. This applies not just to material practices, but also to other types of inscribed but non-textual practice. Most notable here is the progressive marginalisation of cartography from histories of geography. For Keltie and Howarth, for example, it is clear maps were unquestionably part of the geographical tradition. Over the past half century, the synonymy of the history of cartography with the history of geography has become far less taken for granted, perhaps in good part as this same era has seen the emergence of the history of cartography as its own field of inquiry with its own historiographical dynamics, a process which perhaps dates from the efforts of Leo Bagrow in founding *Imago Mundi* in 1935 and producing his benchmark *History of Cartography* in 1944.<sup>92</sup> Specialisation in historical inquiry, then, has perhaps altered the domain to which geographers look as they seek to identify canonical figures. Equally, if maps as ‘visual’ elements of geography’s history have been marginalised over time, the embrace of paintings and other images as legitimate fare for geographical inquiry over the past four decades or so has seen new ‘visual’ geographical material included in our sense of what defines the discipline, although it is not clear that, for example, Gainsborough or Constable have yet entered our canon of geographical worthies by means of canon transference for all the interest in their achievements. The different type of inquiry that geography is and has been – its more than textual nature – tends to cut against the grain

of the canonical project or at least to create different and multiple dynamics of inclusion, exclusion and temporal change to its canons.

#### Our Canon Is One Of Names Not Texts:

Geography is unusual compared to other inquiries in the humanities in a further way. For the era prior to 1870, geographers have canons of 'core' thinkers arrayed in their disciplinary histories, but they do not have easy pedagogic access to the primary texts of those thinkers. For the era after 1870, anthologies abound in geography, but prior to this era of the putative 'birth of modern geography', the only Anglophone sourcebook is Kish's aforementioned *Sourcebook of Geography* which is thirty-five years old, long since out of print and very little cited by geographers. Two distinguished medieval historical geographers have noted geography's decreasing preoccupation with its longer term past.<sup>93</sup> While such a 'temporal distance decay' function in fact applies more generally as has been noted,<sup>94</sup> and while it is also rather too easily exaggerated in its intensity given the recent proliferation of quality work on topics such as Ancient, Medieval and Byzantine geography, one can say that historians and literary students at least have easy access to original writings in English translations from antiquity onwards in both critical scholarly editions and affordable anthologies built from those editions, these latter forming a pedagogic bedrock for new scholars. For geography, the situation could not be more different, and the historical soil is more impoverished than the laments of two medievalists might imply, coming right up the profile as far as the early nineteenth century and applying not merely to 'fringe' figures but to those who have for a century formed the core of our geographical canons. Thus the first full-length publication of Kant's physical geography lectures in English appeared in 2012.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Humboldt's *Cosmos* is only available in the form of two of the four volumes of Otté's translation from the 1850s (albeit in a modern reprint)<sup>96</sup> and only over the past five years have we begun to see his writings made more generally available in modern translations thanks to the University of Chicago Press's 'Alexander von Humboldt in English' project.<sup>97</sup> For Varenus and Ritter, by contrast, one has to rely exclusively on

antiquated translations to the extent that their works are accessible at all.<sup>98</sup> Geographers may make evocations of august predecessors who form the serried ranks of a canon, cherished and contested, but it is very hard to access their writings in critical editions, let alone point students to digestible ways of engaging with their legacies.

#### Cassandra's Concluding Canon: Our Canons Remain Nominal At Our Peril

Does geography have a canon? It is possible to argue against the proposition if we compare the argument to date with the function of canons in the humanities more generally. If geography's canon has been claimed to be mainly nominal here, this is at some considerable remove from the normal meaning of a canon: students of English literature, for example, read Milton, they do not merely read about him. Further, students would make a clear distinction between studying Milton's own work and reading literary histories and works of criticism engaging with Milton, where in geography the only encounter students have with, say, Humboldt, tends to be via histories of the subject not via reading Humboldt's works. It is possible, then, to suggest that unlike literature, music or architecture, for example, geography's debates about canons are entirely about historical and historiographical questions rather than about the core and constitutive ideas of those individuals and their enduring relevance to the conceptualisation and practice of the discipline. In short, if one holds to a 'strong' interpretation of what a canon is and of its role in constituting the vital core of a discipline it is possible to argue geography does not demonstrate canonical dynamics in its operation; geographers are not legatees of the ideas of Varenus or Cook in the same way as musicians are of Bach and Mozart, Kant qua geographer is a name geographers invoke where Kant qua philosopher is an active interlocutor to his present day successors.

The present essay has tried to suggest that geography does not have a strong canonical dynamic of the variety exhibited in the humanities subjects just mentioned, but that it does exhibit a 'weak' canonicity nonetheless. By this it is meant that geography does have an enduring canon of valued individuals, that this canon sees shifts in how individuals are appraised and in the ways the

subject they are contributing to is understood, while elements of contestation, counter-canoncity and contingency add to the vibrancy of the canon. And yet geography's canon remains a weak one in that it is far more a roll call of names to be evoked, than of texts and other artefacts with which to engage. It might be deemed a genealogical canon – the construction of a pedigree – rather than a vital or living canon.

In concluding we can suggest that this weak or genealogical canonicity is problematic for two sets of reasons, scholarly and political. On the scholarly front, Stefan Collini's recent defence of university learning in the humanities makes two interconnected points of importance here. First, 'learning what is involved in conducting enquiry in a certain discipline grows partly out of being exposed to examples of such work and then being incited, not to reproduce them, but to produce a piece of work of one's own that is informed by having come to understand what the examples are examples *of*'.<sup>99</sup> If we take seriously the idea that past geographers can have meaning to our inquiries in the present and to those of the students we teach, we must have access to the words, images and artefacts that those past geographers produced, and we must provide those items to our students in suitable pedagogic forms. The canonical debates that geography has had seem to miss the point: the problem is not the politics of inclusion and exclusion so much as the inability to actually engage directly with canonical figures to scrutinise their merits and defects, to question their permanence and modernity. Second, why does this matter? As Collini puts it at a later stage in his argument: 'the more there already exists an elaborated and sophisticated tradition of enquiry in a particular area, the more demanding and rigorous will be the process of acquiring and revising understanding'.<sup>100</sup> If geographers continue to invoke and debate canons of 'great geographers' without being able to engage with them directly, their argumentation must remain at a superficial level, must remain the unveiling of theoretical positions relatively uninflected by encounter with the complexities of what people really said, made or did in the past. Our ability to make canons, to contest canons and to demand from and produce in our students intellectual sophistication is predicated on geographers as a community being able to engage with those we deem canonical directly and in detail. And why

does this matter politically? If 'life in universities is now *less unlike* life in other large organizations than at any time in the long history of these singular institutions', critical, direct engagement with canonical figures offers some form of Foucauldian heterotopia.<sup>101</sup> The injunction to engage directly with canonical predecessors, the modern *locus classicus* of which is the intellectual platform set up by the so-called 'Cambridge school' of intellectual history, is heterotopic in that it refuses the trammels of commercial ephemerality which are eroding the distinctiveness of the university, it intimates a different logic of scholarly inquiry as a conversation on terms other than those of consumption and commerce, it creates a context wherein contestation occurs in ways at variance from those dictated by the market.<sup>102</sup> With the Hellenistic grammarians, 'kanonikos' allows scholars to determine and debate what is 'up to standard' and where that standard may lie, not to be told that standards are things invented and audited by others outside the academy. If the canon wars started in the late 1960s, an era of unprecedented funding of higher education, a half century later, perhaps we can see a certain grandeur in the interlinked scholarly economy of the canonical vision *and* its contestation which was less needed then than now.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Alter, *Canon and Creativity: Modern Writing and the Authority of Scripture*, New Haven, 2000, 1.

<sup>2</sup> J. Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, Chicago, 1993, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 6-27.

<sup>4</sup> F. Kermode, *Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of the Canon*, Oxford, 2004, 15-31. See also the title essay in I. Calvino, *Why Read the Classics?*, London, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Alter, *Canon and Creativity*, 21-60

<sup>6</sup> S. Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, Ma., 1980.

<sup>7</sup> F. Kermode, *Forms of Attention: Botticelli and Hamlet*, Chicago, 1985, 36 and 62. See also D. Fishelov, *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics of Canon Formation*, Brighton, 2010.

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<sup>8</sup> Kermode, *Forms*, 1-31; cf Kermode, *Pleasure and Change*, 32-50.

<sup>9</sup> Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 30, emphasis in original.

<sup>10</sup> D. Hollinger, What is our 'Canon'? How American Intellectual Historians Debate the Core of their Field, *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012) 185-200.

<sup>11</sup> B. Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory*, Cambridge, Ma., 1988.

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Maria-Dolores Garcia-Ramon, Globalisation and International Geography: Questions of Languages and Scholarly Traditions, *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (2003) 1-5; and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, On English as a Vehicle to Preserve Geographical Diversity, *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (2004) 1-4.

<sup>13</sup> Of particular note in this regard are the suite of titles published by SAGE on key thinkers, key ideas and key concepts, but there is also the more general burgeoning of companions and readers, each of which has canon-building properties by the very nature of its ambitions. While this has not received great attention in geography, historians of science have begun to attend to these issues: see the Focus section in *Isis*, 103 (2012) 83-138 on 'Textbooks in the Sciences'.

<sup>14</sup> For which see R. Mayhew, Geography's Genealogies, in: J. Agnew, D. Livingstone (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, London, 2011, 21-38.

<sup>15</sup> G. Dunbar, *Geography: Discipline, Subject and Profession since 1870*, Dordrecht, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> O. Peschel, *Geschichte Der Erdkunde, bis auf A V Humboldt und K Ritter*, Munich, 1865.

<sup>17</sup> Although geographers had, of course, functioned in the British universities for a far longer time: see C. Withers and R. Mayhew, Rethinking 'Disciplinary' History: Geography in British Universities, c.1580-1887, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 27 (2002) 11-29.

<sup>18</sup> E. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography*, London, 1879; C.R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, London, 1897-1906. Ian Scargill, *The Oxford School of Geography, 1899-1999*, Oxford, 1999, 7-8.

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<sup>19</sup> For Gunther, see A. Gunther, *Robert T. Gunther: A Pioneer in the History of Science*, Oxford, 1967.

For Taylor, see Avril Maddrell, *Complex Locations: Women's Geographical Work in the UK, 1850-1970*, Oxford, 2009, 170-86.

<sup>20</sup> J. Scott Keltie and O. Howarth, *History of Geography*, London, 1913; and R. Dickinson and O. Howarth, *The Making of Geography*, Oxford, 1933. The relationship between the two projects is mentioned in Dickinson's unpaginated 'Preface' to the 1976 Greenwood Press reprint of *Making of Geography*.

<sup>21</sup> See for example G.W. Stocking Jr, From Physics to Ethnology: Franz Boas' Arctic Expedition as a problem in the historiography of the behavioral sciences, *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* 1(1965) 54-66.

<sup>22</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 97 (Harrison), 95-6 (La Condamine and Maupertius), 97 (Sisson) and 94 (Richter).

<sup>23</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 101 and 103.

<sup>24</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 105-6. Carpenter had already been elevated for his contribution to geography by H. Mill, On research in geographical science, *Geographical Journal* 18 (1901) 407-24. This view was to be reinforced by J. Baker, Nathanael Carpenter and English Geography in the Seventeenth Century, *Geographical Journal* 71 (1928) 261-71. The assessment of Varenus by Keltie and Howarth became a commonplace, being repeated, for example, by P. James, On the Origin and Persistence of Error in Geography, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 57 (1967) 1-24 at 21. On the lack of evidence to support this contention, see R. Mayhew, Printing Posterity: Editing Varenus and the Construction of Geography's History, in: M. Ogborn, C. Withers (Eds), *Geographies of the Book*, Aldershot, 2010, 157-87.

<sup>25</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 67 (Humboldt) and 85 (Bougainville).

<sup>26</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 119-20 (Kant), 120-3 (Pinkerton). As we will see, Kant has remained core to the pedagogic canon down the decades. Pinkerton's geography has only been



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discussed subsequently in more specialist literature: see for example F. Sitwell, John Pinkerton: An Armchair Geographer of the Early Nineteenth Century, *Geographical Journal* 138 (1972) 470-9; and R. Mayhew, *Enlightenment Geography: The Political Languages of British Geography, c.1650-1850*, Basingstoke, 2000, 184-92.

<sup>28</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 120.

<sup>29</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 123; cf 142.

<sup>30</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 138.

<sup>31</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 144-5.

<sup>32</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 135.

<sup>33</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 145.

<sup>35</sup> J. Scott Keltie, Geographical Education – Report to the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, *Royal Geographical Society Supplementary Papers* 1.4 (1886), 447-594, at 476.

<sup>36</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 145-6.

<sup>37</sup> Keltie and Howarth, *History*, 147.

<sup>38</sup> Dickinson and Howarth, *Making*, 254-8.

<sup>39</sup> G. Martin, In Memoriam: Richard Hartshorne, 1899-1992, *Annals of Association of American Geographers* 84 (1994) 480-92 at 485.

<sup>40</sup> On the role of the arbitrary in the history of geography, Mayhew, *Geography's Genealogies*.

<sup>41</sup> R. Hartshorne, Notes towards a Bibliography of the *Nature of Geography*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (1979), 63-76 at 73.

<sup>42</sup> See R. Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past*, Lancaster, Pa, 1939) Chapter II, sections A and B for this binary.

<sup>43</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 24; cf. Hartshorne, Notes, 67.

<sup>44</sup> Hartshorne, Notes, 64-6 and 71-4; cf. Martin, In Memoriam, 483-5.

<sup>45</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 33.

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<sup>46</sup> Hartshorne used Peschel's *Abhandlungen zur Erd- und Völkerkunde* (Leipzig, 1877) and Emil Wisotzki's *Zeitströmungen in der Geographie* (Leipzig, 1897).

<sup>47</sup> In this and all subsequent tallies of authors cited, I have only (unless otherwise stated) looked to those cited in the chapter/s addressing the 'long' eighteenth century. Obviously canonical figures from the long eighteenth century may be and in fact are cited at other points in each of these books, as, say, Preston James discussing Benjamin Franklin and Lewis Evans as precursors to nineteenth century American geography – see P. James, *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas*, Indianapolis, 1972, 194 note 12. Thus, tallies will be less accurate where authors move across the centuries more freely in each chapter. In defence of my approach, one would assume most students looking for a canon of eighteenth century geographers would primarily address the relevant chapter/s. One would also assume that most authors would attempt to address those they wished to frame as the core canonical figures for any given age in the most chronologically pertinent chapter/s. The method also creates a decent ability to compare different authors on the same grounds when addressing the nature and balance of their canonical decisions.

<sup>48</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 36 and 38 (Kant), 41-2 (Varenius).

<sup>49</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 43-7.

<sup>50</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 49.

<sup>51</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 24, summarising Sauer's view.

<sup>53</sup> Martin, *In Memoriam*, 487.

<sup>54</sup> I have used the first, 1972, edition of *All Possible Worlds*, but also consulted the fourth edition of 2005. Most of the sections on the long eighteenth century are unaltered across the editions. The historiographical framework is entirely unaltered. The only readily discernible adjustments made are to update secondary referencing in the history of geography and the history of science and some minor changes of phrasing.

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<sup>55</sup> G. Martin, Preston E James, 1899-1986, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78 (1988) 164-75 at 171.

<sup>56</sup> Martin, Preston E James, 167.

<sup>57</sup> R. Dickinson, Postscript, 1975 in *The Making of Geography*, Westport, Ct., 1976, unpaginated (first verso page).

<sup>58</sup> Martin, Preston E James, 168.

<sup>59</sup> James, *All Possible Worlds*, xii.

<sup>60</sup> This, of course, cuts against the grain of James's own periodisation, a point to which I will return in my concluding comments.

<sup>61</sup> This figure would be inflated by one if Thomas Jefferson were included as born under the British empire.

<sup>62</sup> James, *All Possible Worlds*, 126-7 and 131 on Halley and Hooke, and 132-40 on the sciences of man.

<sup>63</sup> James, *All Possible Worlds*, 129-32.

<sup>64</sup> James, *All Possible Worlds*, xii; and G. Kish, *A Sourcebook in Geography*, Cambridge Ma., 1978, x and ix-x.

<sup>65</sup> T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography*, Harlow, 1992, 66-79, at 74.

<sup>66</sup> A. Holt-Jensen, *Geography: History and Concepts*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, London, 2009, 38-46, reference to Hartshorne at 46. Jensen's book has adopted such a Hartshornian framework all but unaltered in each of its editions.

<sup>67</sup> Classics in Human Geography Revisited: DN Livingstone: The Geographical Tradition, *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (2004), 227-34 at 232.

<sup>68</sup> D. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise*, Oxford, 1992, 138.

<sup>69</sup> Livingstone, *Geographical Tradition*, 139-42.

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<sup>70</sup> D. Stoddart, *On Geography and its History*, Oxford, 1987, 33-36 mobilises the quintessentially 'Enlightened' concepts of reason and empiricism in its depiction of geography being 'born' in 1769, but never actually uses the term 'Enlightenment'.

<sup>71</sup> Livingstone, *Geographical Tradition*, 126-32.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, M. Heffernan, *Histories of Geography*, in: N. Clifford *et al* (Eds), *Key Concepts in Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, London, 2009, 3-20; and R. Mayhew, *Cosmographers, Explorers, Cartographers, Chorographers: Defining, Inscribing and Practising Early Modern Geography, c.1450-1850*, in: J. Agnew, J. Duncan (Eds), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, Oxford, 2011, 23-49.

<sup>73</sup> R. Johnston *et al* (Eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Oxford, 2000, 208-10; and D. Gregory *et al* (Eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed, Oxford, 2009, 193-5. All three entries were by Charles Withers. As editor, Johnston sees the entry of 'enlightenment' into the *Dictionary* as part of a 'root and branch restructuring' commenced in 1996. The reduction from two entries to one for the 2009 edition was part of an attempt to save space, showing how the pragmatics of publication can determine canonicity choices. Personal communication.

<sup>74</sup> C. Withers, *Enlightenment Geography*, in: R. Kitchen, N. Thrift (Eds), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Amsterdam, 2009, 3: 471-86. My thanks to Charles Withers for his comments concerning all three of his pedagogic entries addressing Enlightenment and geography.

<sup>75</sup> Martin, *In Memoriam*, 487-8, referring to the critical collection of essays constituted by J. Entrikin and S. D Brunn (Eds), *Reflections on Richard Hartshorne's The Nature of Geography* Washington, 1989.

<sup>76</sup> F. Driver, ed *Geographical Traditions: Rethinking the History of Geography*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20 (1995) 403-22.

<sup>77</sup> See S. Elden and E. Mendieta (Eds), *Reading Kant's Geography*, New York, 2011, esp. chapters by Withers and Stark on Kant's geographical text, and by O'Neill and by Malpas and Thiel on the relationship between this and Kant's critical philosophy.

<sup>78</sup> Hartshorne, *Nature*, 42n.5.

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- <sup>79</sup> Cf. James, *All Possible Worlds*, 139-40 and Livingstone, *Geographical Tradition*, 182-3.
- <sup>80</sup> T. Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism*, Piscataway, 2012.
- <sup>81</sup> Kermode, *Pleasure and Change*, 33-4; Fishelov, *Dialogues*, 65.
- <sup>82</sup> D. Kaiser, A Tale of Two Textbooks: Experiments in Genre, *Isis* 103 (2012) 126-38.
- <sup>83</sup> Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 31.
- <sup>84</sup> Livingstone, *Classics Revisited*, 233.
- <sup>85</sup> Hollinger, What is our Canon?, 190.
- <sup>86</sup> Calvino, *Why Read the Classics?*, 4 also attends to this phenomenon of canonical cyclicity.
- <sup>87</sup> C. Barnett, Awakening the Dead: Who needs the history of geography?, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20 (1995) 417-19 at 419.
- <sup>88</sup> See especially D. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge*, Chicago, 2003. The scope of the 'geographies of knowledge' rubric is canvassed in D. Finnegan, The Spatial Turn: Geographical Approaches in the History of Science, *Journal of the History of Biology* 41 (2008) 369-88 and R. Powell, Geographies of Science: Histories, Localities, Practices, Futures, *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (2007) 309-27.
- <sup>89</sup> Thanks to Bill Koelsch for his reflections on Hartshorne's impact in US geography, especially at Clark.
- <sup>90</sup> My thanks to Ron Johnston for this information on New Zealand.
- <sup>91</sup> For the long eighteenth century, this point is explored by C. Withers, Eighteenth-century geography: texts, practices, sites, *Progress in Human Geography* 30 (2006) 711-729.
- <sup>92</sup> For elements of a history of the history of cartography in this era, see Matthew Edney, Academic Cartography, Internal Map History, and the Critical Study of Mapping Processes, *Imago Mundi Supplement* (2014), 83-105; for Bagrow, see Michael Heffernan and Catherine Delano-Smith, A Life in Maps: Leo Bagrow, Imago Mundi, and the History of Cartography in the Early Twentieth Century, *Imago Mundi Supplement* (2014), 44-69.

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<sup>93</sup> R. Jones, What Time Human Geography?, *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (2004) 287-304; and K. Lilley, Geography's Medieval History: A Neglected Enterprise? *Dialogues in Human Geography* 1 (2011) 147-62.

<sup>94</sup> R. Mayhew, Nostalgia, Neglect and the Necessity of a Historicised Geography, *Dialogues in Human Geography* 1 (2011) 169-73.

<sup>95</sup> E. Watkins (Ed), *Kant: Natural Science*, Cambridge, 2012. Issues about the text translated and its tangled relationship to the several stages of Kant's lecture notes are addressed in: W. Stark, Kant's Lectures on 'Physical Geography': A brief outline of its origins, transmission, and development: 1754-1805, in Elden and Mendieta, *Reading Kant's Geography*, 69-86. Prior to this, access to Kant's geography in English was only via a translation of his introduction in James May, *Kant's Concept of Geography and its Relation to Recent Geographical Thought*, Toronto, 1970, 255-264.

<sup>96</sup> Johns Hopkins Press, issued the first two volumes of Otté's translation with introductions in 1997. In 2011 Cambridge University Press also reissued Otté's 1850 translation of Humboldt's *Views of Nature*.

<sup>97</sup> Thus we have translations of *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (2009), of the *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba* (2011) and of *Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas* (2013).

<sup>98</sup> Ritter's key work, *Comparative Geography* is only available in English in Gage's 1865 translation, whilst no English translation of Varenus's *Geographia Generalis* has been published since 1765. There was a more modern translation of the Dedication and Introduction to Varenus in Margarita Bowen, *Empiricism and Geographical Thought: From Francis Bacon to Alexander von Humboldt*, Cambridge, 1981, 276-283.

<sup>99</sup> S. Collini, *What Are Universities For?*, London, 2012, 9.

<sup>100</sup> Collini, *Universities*, 56.

<sup>101</sup> Collini, *Universities*, 18.

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<sup>102</sup> See in particular the methodological work of Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock, work which is also addressed by Andrew Barry in this collection of essays.